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LETTERS

FROM

A PARENT

ON THE

EDUCATION

OF

CHILDREN.

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*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he  
will not depart from it.*

PROV. XXII. 6.

“ Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,

“ And teach the young idea how to shoot.

THOMPSON.

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L O N D O N:

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MDECC.



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L E T T E R S, &c.  
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Dear Sir,

I Know not how to arrange in a clearer manner, the remarks I have made at various times on the subject of Religious Education, than by giving you an artless relation of the circumstances which occurred to produce them. When collected in this manner, if they appear to contain any thing worthy to be communicated to others, you are at perfect liberty to make them known, without the name of the Author.

I feel some reluctance in treating the subject as I have proposed, because it obliges me to trouble you with a part of my own history;—a subject, of all others, the most difficult. I do not think these remarks deserving the attention of those who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal, religious education; yet as there are multitudes, who are deprived of such privileges as they might easily attain, were christian parents to attempt what is generally in their power, some observations, suited to such parents, may be useful. They should reflect, that numbers of children, even of religious parents, have been prevented from a considerable degree of usefulness on earth, and consequently, of happiness in heaven, because the opportunities have been lost in which their capacities might have been improved; partly from inattention, and partly from the incapacity of parents; but these were criminal, because they might have been avoided.



While these reflections impressed my mind with a sense of a parent's duty, it was natural to consider, that every conscientious person is bound to serve his generation ;—that those labours are most important which promote Knowledge and Love ;—and consequently, that he who promotes the instruction of youth, in subjects which affect their interests in both worlds, is certainly doing a very important part of his business on earth. Should these pages serve this valuable end, they will, indeed, be as bread cast upon the waters, to be found after many days. The little efforts I have made in the education of my own children, were suggested by the inconveniencies I had suffered from the want of proper attention to that object in my youth. I was placed in a situation similar, in point of instruction, to perhaps, the greatest part of the religious world. My father was a tradesman, possessed of but little property. He died when I was under two years of age. My mother procured the best instruction, the place we lived in, would admit of. I was taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and a smattering of Latin and French. At fourteen I was bound an apprentice, where I continued till I was twenty-one.

I had been early taught to reverence the Sabbath, pray in secret, and read the scriptures ; but knew nothing of experimental religion, till I was about sixteen ; when it pleased God to give me some acquaintance with himself. This produced a thirst after religious knowledge ; and my leisure hours were carefully employed in perusing such religious books as I could meet with ; but the more I read,—the more I lamented my want of earlier and more general information. I found my judgment exceedingly uninformed in almost all those subjects connected with either the Evidences or Doctrines of Revelation. I wished to be useful to my fellow creatures ; but want of information, made me afraid, in numerous instances, to speak or act. I found that



that the time of my life, most favourable for obtaining instruction, had passed away, and I had learnt little to render me useful, either in the world, or the church.

When I afterwards had children capable of instruction, I more than ever lamented my defects. I knew they claimed my utmost attention. The sanctification of their natures, belonged to God: He alone could make them wise to salvation; but it was a parent's duty TO INSTRUCT.

My difficulties in discharging this duty, were, in some respects, daily increasing. A numerous and afflicted family, extensive and important business, added to the defects in my own education, rendered the trust committed to me more difficult. But God had given me a post I could not quit. I was a Parent, and therefore had no discharge from the parent's part. Remembering that the Seed-time, of infancy and youth, would never return to my offspring;—that next to the salvation of my own soul, I had no greater business on earth than the care of my children;—that providing them with sustenance, was not more necessary than procuring for them proper instruction;—that the want of food would but destroy their bodies;—but want of instruction might destroy their souls: I therefore earnestly besought the FATHER of Spirits to assist me;—and determined by his grace, I would leave nothing undone for their instruction, that was in my power.

Impressed with a sense of the importance of a parent's charge, I was led to consider, 1st, For what purpose instruction should be given. 2nd, What sort of instruction I had in my power to give. 3d. In what manner I could most effectually do this? The result of these enquiries I shall reserve for the ensuing letters.

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## LETTER II.

## ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

Dear Sir,

THE first enquiry made, was, "For what purpose should Instruction be given?" I will give you my reflections on this, as they arose in my own breast. "Our children are born for two worlds. They, indeed, who think this world is all, have certainly fewer cares in the education of their offspring;—their motto is, "Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die." They imagine, that they have nothing to do with God as the supreme Governor; nor with invisible and eternal things, as their chief concern. They have no difficulties respecting revealed Truth, in any of its parts. The distinction between sin and holiness, is of little moment to them; nor, on their principles, do they need to be solicitous about the information of the mind; for, as it subsists for so very short a period, it would be folly to enrich a casket which must so soon perish. I cannot forbear these reflections, when I consider, for what purpose am I called to watch over my rising offspring? Gracious God! what views rush in upon my mind! This infant, that is committed to my care, must exist in time and eternity! Who shall direct? Who shall assist me in the mighty task? To train up a Being for Eternity! An heir of God! A joint heir with Jesus Christ! Should he be lost thro' my sloth and folly? Should he live, and grow, and die, in ignorance, guilt, and sin, thro' my omissions? How! O! how shall I meet him in his final state? Whatever I have to do for his welfare, in time, let me consider,—"What means are most likely to benefit his immortal spirit? Where shall I find instruction suited to this purpose?" I cannot hesitate;—thy Word is my unerring Guide:—There I learn the way into the holiest  
of

of all :—By the light of this Word, I am shewn, that the purpose for which thou hast formed the children of men, is, to serve their generation,—to glorify thee on earth ;—and to be for ever with Thee in glory. This, then, is the chief End of Education,—that our children may be useful while they live, and happy when they die. Since this is the end that I ought to have in view, in the instruction of my children,—my next enquiry is,—What is that Instruction which should be given them in order to promote this end ? Certainly the great Truths contained in the Scriptures ; particularly, those respecting the accountableness and immortality, of man ;—the Being and Perfections of God ;—the ruin of human nature in Adam ;—and the Redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ. These, with their immediate consequences, are the leading subjects which should early, uniformly, and perseveringly, be instilled into the minds of my children. For if these sacred truths have a place in the heart, they will surely bring forth fruit to eternal life. How then shall I sow the seed ? By what means shall I so convey these sacred principles into their tender minds, that they may neither mistake, nor forget them ? How shall their memories be sufficiently stored, and yet not oppressed ? Again : What time shall I appropriate to this employ ? As my children are yet young, the labour is less than it may be at a future period, when their understandings shall be more capable of receiving the reasons of what is taught them. At present, the opportunities I have with them, are chiefly from seven till eight in the morning ; two hours on a Saturday forenoon ; and some hours on the sabbath-day. This time, however, is not employed by me, entirely on religious subjects ; but includes all the opportunities I have with them for every topic.



We generally take the subjects they are learning in rotation, so that, by appropriating the Sabbath entirely to religious instruction, they have usually three times in a week to converse with me on matters of religion. My next enquiry was, In what manner should the time be employed? A recital of particulars will answer this question. At the period alluded to, the religious subjects they were taught, were few and obvious; treating chiefly of the Nature and Perfections of God;—his Laws;—the Fall of Man;—the Person and Mediation of Christ;—the Punishment of the wicked;—the Blessedness of Heaven. These were daily taught them. Texts of Scripture and Children's Hymns were committed to memory for that purpose. Their first employ after breakfast was to get by heart, one or two texts of scripture, with a verse or more of a suitable hymn, which was repeated to me that morning in course. They daily read short lessons in the New and Old Testament. I have thus, Sir, given you an account of the first attempts I made in the religious instruction of my children. If I do not exhaust your patience, I will proceed to inform you of the progress made in this branch of their instruction for several years, so as to comprise the method pursued, till they arrived to about the age of thirteen, and then to mention the other branches of education as they occurred; but I thought it preferable to close my remarks on religion, before I began the other. I will not apologize for adding to this Letter some remarks which were made by me, on the plan I had pursued, at the time my eldest boy was about eight, and my second about six years of age; they were as follow: “I have to rejoice that the understandings of my children appear to improve in divine things;—they discern something of the nature of Good and Evil;—there appears a degree of the fear of God in them;—they not only abhor lying, prophane words, &c.; but sometimes reprove such of their play-fellows as they observe doing  
wrong

wrong. I begin to conclude, that I discern the good effects of the method I have taken for their information."

Such were my views after a short trial. My next will inform you of the enlarged endeavours I made for their improvement in religious knowledge.

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

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### LETTER III.

#### ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

Dear Sir,

AS the husbandman watches the rising blade, and rejoices in the genial showers of spring; so will pious parents carefully inspect the openings of sacred Truth, in the understandings and affections of their children. We frequently expect too little from God; and perhaps, our defect is seldom more manifest, than in the expectations we have for our offspring. When the husbandman casts in the seed, and covers it with the earth, he has no doubt of the descending showers, and the vital influences of the sun;—but how often do devout parents plentifully sow the seed of divine Truth,—water it with their prayers and tears,—yea, and frequently see showers of divine influence descending upon the affections of their offspring, and yet neglect to look for the growth of the seed. They *desire*, rather than *expect*, that Truth should spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven. I am sure I have much to lament on this account. Yet there was one method, in this branch of religious education, which, from its importance, I judged it my duty, and my privilege to adopt; and which I more particularly mention here, be-

cause I have not observed it attended to elsewhere. I will explain and exemplify what I allude to, viz. To preserve in writing, remarks on the progress which my children appeared to make in their acquaintance with sacred things: By this means, I had an opportunity, not only of observing their progress in knowledge, but of reviewing the particular subjects which had made the greatest impression on their minds, and also keeping in remembrance the seasons in which divine grace appeared to influence them; yet as I think such a method important, I will annex a few of the memorandums preserved in this manner.

March 13. I purpose giving my eldest son a blank book, and will encourage him to make memorandums of what he can recollect of the sermons he has heard. June 5th. I had some very profitable conversation with my son lately; his mind seems to open to divine things: I have reason to believe that he is drawn to secret prayer. June 26th. I find, in repeated instances, he can give a tolerable account of the heads of a discourse. He has this day very perfectly recited the leading parts of three sermons which he had heard, and discovers some information upon the subjects he hears: For instance, he was asked, "How would you expect—Isaiah lv. 1,—to be treated,—if a sermon was to be preached from that text?" He replied,—“the waters I understand, are the blessings of the Gospel:—It would certainly be proper to shew,—1. “What these blessings are; 2dly, Who thirst for them?” Imperfect as these thoughts are, they manifest some acquaintance with the sacred Word. I had, at different parts of this day, much serious conversation with him, in which I found great freedom and pleasure, in shewing him, how God answered prayer, and gave peace to the conscience.

July 3d.



July 3d. He gave me some account of what he had read and heard. On being asked, "If he recollected any particular part in which he found his mind affected?" He replied,—“In reading how Beveridge *lived*, I thought, if I neglected to live holy, I could not be saved.”

Sept. 3d. In a conversation with my son this day, I had the pleasure of observing, that his mind was opened to understand how christian self-denial, was a mean of promoting true happiness. It was observed,—“Animals have a pleasure in motion; and young animals appear to be in a state of happiness when in their gambols:—Thus, all who place their chief good in dancing, racing, hunting, &c. are little superior to them.” He was then asked, “Wherein the bliss of angels consisted?” To which he replied, “In their goodness, and enjoying a sense of their Maker’s favour:” From hence it was inferred, he might learn, that those who denied themselves every animal gratification which offended God, certainly promoted their own happiness.

Nov. 3d. The following conversation took place this day which gives me hopes that my son’s understanding is considerably enlightened, and his mind, in some degree, awakened to a sense of divine things. Question. Do you know that, as the human nature was defiled in consequence of the original transgression, no person can enter heaven unless a change takes place in his heart? Answer. I clearly understand that. Q. If you understand this,—have you reason to think, that such a change, as prepares you for heaven, has already passed in your heart? A. No: I do not think there has. Q. Why do you suppose it has not? A. Because, I think, if it had, I should love better to read God’s word. Q. I observe that you always kneel down

night and morning ;—Do you always say the same words ?  
 A. No : I do not. Q. What do you say ? A. I ask God  
 to save my soul, as well as I can.

January 1. My children both wept, while we were reading and conversing about the destruction of ungodly men. My heart yearned over them. I found strong desires that God would preserve them at school, from the corruptions and temptations to which they there would be exposed. I advised my eldest, to pray for direction,—to beware of evil example ;—to be willing to be ridiculed for his regard to religion ;—to reason with those who might oppose him. He answered, He was called the preacher, &c. &c.

June 26. My eldest son assures me,—“ That he finds some pleasure in prayer ;—does not confine himself to a form ;—but endeavours to speak to God, as to his Father, in Christ Jesus ;—that he has felt some pleasure in seeking a blessing on his learning, and in praying for his father ;—that when he thinks upon death, judgment and eternity, he hopes the Lord will be gracious to him, not because he has never done wrong, but because of his mercy in Christ Jesus ;—and that the Lord has given him a sincere desire to do his Will. May the bruised reed never be broken ! The smoking flax never be quenched ! Oct. 7th. I have not lately remarked the conversations I have had with my son ; but what passed this morning, I wish to preserve, just as it occurred.

Father. Did you understand the reason why I was so much displeased with you last night.

Son. No, I did not.

F. I will now tell you. I have lately thought, I saw some appearances in your disposition which were unpromising, and last night I took that method to discover them to you :

you:—But, will you tell me, what it is that makes Satan oppose God?

S. He is desirous of doing his own will, and unwilling to submit to the will of God.

F. You have said right;—and because he cannot do his own will, he is filled with enmity and rage against God and his works: Hence, he is continually tormented with pride, wrath, and malice. But why are holy angels and saints in heaven, free from these tormenting passions?

S. Because they submit to the will of God.

F. Observe, my dear, that when sin entered into the world, the human nature sunk into a degree of that Self-will, which prevails in hell. Hence, wicked men are said to be haters of God;—and the carnal mind is enmity against him. Now, nothing but the sanctifying grace of God, can deliver us from this enmity: But education, instruction, and reproof, are means which parents should use with their children, in order to promote the sanctification of their nature. In spring and summer, when you are walking in the garden, whether do you think it best to let the walks and beds be over-run with weeds, or diligently to pull them up as soon as they appear?

S. Certainly, as soon as they appear.

F. Keep this in view;—and observe, that your father has endeavoured to act in this manner. In general, he sees you very affectionate and obedient;—he believes, it is your great endeavour to shew your love to him:—But he knows, that you partake of a corrupt nature;—that you bear about you that Self-will, which is enmity to God: The preventing grace of God has hitherto greatly restrained it: Yet there are some circumstances which shew, that it is in you, and render it my duty to make you sensible of it. Tho' the instances are few, and not very striking, yet like tender weeds in the flower beds, they should not be suffered

to



to grow. Are not you yourself conscious, that in some cases in which you do not get your own will,—you behave with coldness, if not rudeness, to those around you?

S. I am really sensible of this.

F. I have thought, that even to myself, tho' it was in a very slight degree, there has been in some particular instances, a want of respect. What passed yesterday, had an appearance of this, and led me to act as I did, in order to shew you the root from whence such tempers spring. But there is another subject I would enquire of you about. Have you, (in private,) read your Bible this week?

S. I have not since Sabbath-day.

F. Have you not neglected it, contrary to your own judgment?

S. Indeed, I have.

F. If your reflections upon this subject were put into language, would they not be something of this sort? 1. I have an indulgent parent, who often entreats me to spend a few moments in private, each day, in reading the scriptures with regularity. Tho' I love him much, and would not willingly offend him, yet I neglect this. 2. I have no reason to expect the salvation of my soul, while I neglect searching the book of God; yet I do neglect it. 3. I am convinced, that satan will do all he can, to prevent me from perusing this book;—yet I yield to his suggestions. 4. God has written this word for my instruction, he commands me to search it;—when I do not: I know I slight both his Goodness and his Power;—yet I neglect to search this word. Do not such reflections as these sometimes arise?

S. They do.

F. Let me ask you another question,—Do you know what a Testament is?

S. I understand it to be a Will.

F. Whose

F. Whose Will is contained in the Gospels ?

S. The Will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

F. When is a Will put in force ?

S. After the death of the person who made it.

F. Does his Will leave any benefits for you ?

S. I understand, it entitles me to eternal salvation.

F. Were your father to bequeathe to you a vast estate,—  
What would be thought of you,—if you should never look  
over his Will, and claim your privilege ?

S. I should justly be thought very foolish, and very  
ungrateful.

F. I have been telling you, that you have in you a  
high degree of Self-will, which is sinful. You cannot  
change your own nature ;—but your Saviour's Will, not  
only gives you a right to eternal salvation, (upon your  
believing in him,) but contains also promises that relate to  
a deliverance from this unholy nature which troubles you.  
Such as these ; “ I will take away the heart of stone, and  
give an heart of flesh ;—I will write my laws upon their  
hearts, and put them in their minds.” These promises you  
want fulfilled in you ;—but remember, you only can expect  
the accomplishment of them in God's own way. Tho' you  
pray in secret, yet if you neglect to search the scriptures,  
you cannot expect the fulfilment of the promises. I advise  
you to retire ;—take pen, ink, and paper ;—write down, as  
well as you can, the conversation we have had this morn-  
ing ;—and plead with God to bless it to you.

About an hour afterwards, I went into his room ;—he  
threw his arms around me, and wept aloud.

F. Has God, indeed, broke your heart ?

S. He has, indeed, Father.

F. Do you now desire to be wholly his ?

S. I do desire to be his.

I found he had been writing ;—and his own reflections  
had crowded upon him so powerfully, for his neglect, that  
he

he had sunk into great distress, and solemnly promised the Lord, that he would no longer neglect his word. We spent some time in solemn prayer.

By such remarks as these, I was enabled to preserve a strong recollection of the particular seasons in which my children's minds were affected with sacred things. But as impressions on an unenlightened judgment, are easily effaced; as soon, therefore, as they were capable, a proper Catechism was regularly taught them on the Sabbath.

Your's, &c.

#### FROM THE FATHER TO HIS SON.

My dear Boy,

**I** Know not that you will fully understand every thing in this Letter;—but I wish you to read it when alone; and lift up your heart to your FATHER, “who seeth in secret.”—that he may make it a blessing. May he bless you with the same emotions which led me to take up my pen. What sacred joy do I feel from a pleasing hope that you shall one day meet me in the kingdom of glory.

This world is one vast wilderness. It is said in Job, “The sinner travelleth in pain all his days.” Restless cares, unholy desires, secret misgivings, inward horror and despair, prey upon the spirits of those who are living without God in the world: They have no peace, but are like the troubled sea: Destruction and misery are in their ways; the way of peace they have not known. But “Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.” When we are made new creatures, we have peace with God thro’ our Lord Jesus Christ;—Redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of our sins; the world wears a new face;



face; every creature of God is sanctified, and received with thanksgiving. I wish to tell you, (and I hope God will give you the experience of it,) that there is more solid happiness in the consolations which his Spirit imparts to those, who, with broken contrite hearts, seek his face,—in one moment, than in an age of pleasurable sin.

My greatest wish for you is, to see you *happy*. God is my witness how oft I plead for it. I rejoice that happiness is *his gift*. If you enquire,—What is it? I answer, “It is to feel his love shed abroad in your heart. Could I see you as wise, rich, and powerful as Solomon,—yet destitute of the love of God, you would only be wretched.

I write to you while I feel this sacred flame, that you may preserve this in your memory and plead with God that he would make you a partaker of it. What comfort would it give me, to see you happy in the favour of God! I feel a pleasing hope that he will mark you for his own;—that he will draw you to himself;—that you will soon learn,—“His ways are ways of pleasantness and his paths are peace.” Be frequently alone. Speak to God as to a gracious father: Tell him every desire of your heart. Read his word. Value his Sabbaths. Read good Mr. B’s. life frequently on the Sabbath. You have the constant prayers of your affectionate father.

## LETTER II.

**Y**OUR last gave me pleasure, because I thought I could discern a very great improvement in your writing. It is my prayer to God, that you may daily grow wiser and better, and I trust you will lose no means of improvement; but remember, that “It is God that giveth the increase.”

C

I wish

I wish, my dear boy, may soon, very soon,—learn that “without him he can do nothing.” A deep conviction of this, is that—*poverty of spirit*, to which is promised,—“the kingdom of heaven.” You know the poor *are destitute*; they are ready to receive: Thus it is in sacred things.—Those who do not know their ignorance, will not apply to Jesus Christ for instruction: Those who suppose they can make themselves wise, good and happy, will not beg of him to do it for them; but the “poor in spirit,” who know that they are “miserable, blind, naked;” and “utterly without strength” they will mourn and pray for salvation. Surely such will be amongst the hungry, who are “filled with good things;”—whilst those who do not know their wants, will be amongst the rich that are sent empty away.—I have not time to add more: but am your affectionate father.

### LETTER III.

My very dear Boy,

**Y**OUR'S, received this day, gave me heart-felt pleasure, as I believe you do not make greater professions of duty and affection than what are genuine. I have long thought that you are so far above, what St. Paul calls,—“the spirit of the world,” as to make no professions without a real design to fulfil them;—that you are solicitous “to have your conversation with *simplicity* and *godly sincerity*;—remembering, that for every *idle*, much more every *untrue* word, we must give an account. I have frequently rejoiced, that the grace of God has made your conscience so tender, that you are scrupulously cautious, not to *misrepresent* subjects, and thereby *mislead* others; whilst you are prudent enough, not to put yourself into the power of designing persons, by unnecessarily exposing what they have no right to know.

You

You desired me to write you a long letter. You see, by this, I am encouraging you to *reflect*, as you write, especially to your father. I was not only pleased with your letter, because of the affection which you avow for me, but because you write to me with the respect and confidence, I wish you to do. Your affection I never disputed, and the manner in which you conduct yourself, convinces me, that it is guarded with due respect. I am also pleased with the correctness of your letter. I purpose enclosing you an abstract from Sulley's Memoirs, by which you will see how that great man spent his time.—I send it to shew you, that if you desire to be beneficial to your fellow creatures, you must use great diligence. Considering the pains which have been taken with you, I hope, very soon, to find you at the head of each class you are put into: I have little doubt of this, if you apply yourself closely. I expect that you will soon convince your teachers, that you thoroughly *understand* what you learn: If so, they will put you forward. You inform me, that you read from six, till eight, in the evening after school hours: If so, you ought, for your healths' sake, to be without doors, at some exercise at noon. Your manner of spending your vacant hours, on Thursdays and Saturdays, I highly approve. Tell me, how you spend your sabbaths? Have you any very serious thoughts? Do you go to God in prayer, as to your heavenly Father? Do you read his word? Do you meditate upon it? Do you avoid hurtful conversation?—I am your affectionate father.

#### LETTER IV.

My beloved Boy,

**I** Often think of you in my best hours. O! what consolation will it give me, to know that you have that blessed spirit which dwelt in good Mr. Barret, and Mr. Matthew



Henry, when they were very little older than yourself! How did they spend their sabbaths,—in examining the state of their hearts before God! In secret prayer! In meditating upon the scriptures, and sacred things they read and heard!

How shall I mourn, if you return from school less serious than you went, and less disposed for sacred and useful employments. But I trust, God will preserve you. I have just been thinking upon some of the opportunities in which you accompanied me to visit the poor and afflicted, and at our family devotion;—in which seasons, I have found great pleasure in committing you, and your dear brother, to God, to instruct and save you. Do you ever recollect those times, when your mind was affected with the kindness of the Lord to you;—when you were all attention to the sacred truths you heard;—all desire to be wiser and better;—to be, what the Lord would have you to be? Do you feel these desires *now*? Do you, in your secret walks, meditate upon the special goodness of God to you, in giving you kind friends, and so many mercies? Do you, above all, plead with God, that his great mercy in giving his Son for you, may not be in vain? Do you read those pious books, I recommended to you?—I am your affectionate father.

## LETTER V.

My dear Boy,

**Y**OU will, no doubt, be surpris'd and sorry that I left home before I came to see you; but as it was most convenient to myself to do so, I am confident you will think that a sufficient reason. I do not forget daily, to entreat your heavenly Father, that you may be preserved from evil;—

evil ;—that no day,—no instruction may be lost to you ;—that you may, in some degree, resemble him, who increased in wisdom and stature, and was in favour with God and man. Tho' the husbandman were to plough his ground and sow his seed with the utmost diligence, what would he do, were no rain to descend, no sun to shine ? I have endeavoured to do the best I could for you ; and it is my joy, that I can commit you to him who heareth prayer. Do not, my love, do not cease to pray for yourself ; and shall I say, do not forget to pray for your father, that if the Lord will, he may be preserved to you, that a blessing may attend what he has in hand ;—that as you grow up to manhood, you may assist your father, not merely in accumulating money ; but in considering how we may most properly use what we have ;—not in foolish and hurtful expences, but in being “ eyes to the blind ; feet to the lame ; and in making the widow's heart sing for joy.” It will be the greatest joy, I can have, next to the divine favour, to see you and your brother, happy in God ; humbly and zealously endeavouring to employ your time, your understanding, your education, your all, in doing his will, and promoting the holiness and happiness of all around you.

You remember, when Solomon came to the throne, God said to him, “ Ask what I shall give thee.” Do you recollect his answer ? Was it riches ? Was it power ? Was it the necks of his enemies ? No. Solomon's heart was enlarged with love to God and his fellow creatures. I would have you think seriously upon his answer, (see 2 Chron. i. 7 and 12.) What a noble mind ! Did he suffer by being so unconcerned for his own ease, his own honour, his own interest ; by having the good of others so much at heart ? No. He got every thing,—“ Because,” saith God, “ this was in thine heart ;”—this love to others,—this concern for my glory ;—“ and thou hast not asked

asked riches, wealth, nor honour, nor the life of thine enemies,—neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom, and knowledge is granted unto thee, and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had before thee.” Tell me, what passage in the New Testament bears a meaning similar to this; as you may by such means increase your acquaintance with the scriptures.

As I conjecture you have nearly finished the abstracting the book I sent you upon the Evidences of the Truth of Scripture, I wish you to send me, the first convenient opportunity, a short sketch of the five books of Moses, an account of the principal events in each. That the Lord may abundantly bless you, prays your affectionate Father.

## LETTER VI.

My dear Boy,

I Never would send you a Letter, but what is likely to be of lasting use to you; and I frequently write much to you, because I have a great pleasure in communicating those sentiments, which I wish to see forming in your mind, as you rise to maturity. As I am solicitous that you should have all possible acquaintance with the scriptures, I sometimes desire your sentiments in writing, on particular subjects contained in them. But while I do this, I should be sorry to oppress your mind, or that you should do any thing *as a task*. I hope many subjects are already so far committed to memory, that they cannot easily be effaced.

I write



I write thus, that you may fully understand me, and not imagine that when I propose any subject for your enquiry, your father has given you a task, which, if you do not execute, he will be severe with you. No, my love: Hitherto I have been so satisfied with your desire to please me, that, unless it has been in some very rare instances, I have been convinced you had a pleasure, not only in complying with, but in discovering whatever would be agreeable to me. I hope God will increase this disposition in you, and that in every future year of your life, which I am permitted to see, I shall find you requiring less of a parent's authority, and more of his confidence and affection. Whenever I desired you to send me extracts from books, my design was *to lead you to reflect*. A subject has occurred to me this morning, which you can consider, and answer in your next. I wish you to take your Bible, and, beginning at the first chapter of Genesis, to give me the best list you can draw out from the Old and New Testament, of the Names and employments of good Men, which will prove, that they were diligent in business, as well as fervent in spirit. For instance, you may begin with Adam, whose occupation was to till the ground;—Abel kept a flock;—Noah built an Ark, &c. &c. You will confine yourself to those good men, whose characters are the most remarkable.

I am, your affectionate Father.

## LETTER VII.

My very dear Boy,

YOU ask me to pray for you. I do my love, daily intreat the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to bless you with the knowledge of himself;—then you will be wise, good, and happy. Remember, my dear lad, (and may the Lord him-  
self

self write it upon your heart,) *that you are a spirit born for eternity*;—that you dwell a few years in a tabernacle of clay, a body of dust, and must then return to God. I advise you to read frequently in *Baxter's Saints' Rest*, and such books as shew the importance of salvation. You may mark with your pencil or pen, some of those parts that strongly describe the immortality and worth of the soul, and employ a part of your sabbaths, occasionally, in transcribing them. I recollect, that before I was of your age, God gave me, at seasons, such deep convictions of the value of my soul, as led me to plead earnestly with him, that whatever it should cost me,—nothing might prevent me from the attainment of eternal salvation. Who can tell what it will be, to be **HAPPY OR MISERABLE FOR EVER!** Yet this must be your case;—you must join the songs of angels, or lamentations of the lost,—to all eternity.

Look, in your walks, and frequently say,—“ Could I  
 “ number all the blades of grass,—all the leaves of the  
 “ trees,—all the drops of dew,—all the stars of heaven,—  
 “ and the dust of the earth,—they would bear no proportion  
 “ to the ages of my eternal existence.” Let this lead you to frequent prayer, and remember, that God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that sinners, the chief of sinners, who seek his face, and believe in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. Be assured of this, that Jesus Christ came to save you, from an eternity of sorrow, and give you, an eternity of joy. Often in your solitary hours, especially when your mind is affected with these things, pour out your soul to your Father who seeth in secret; and plead that passage in Matt. vii. 7,—10. Indeed, my love, I shall have little doubt of your conversion and salvation, if once you earnestly begin to seek the Lord for yourself. Be not afraid to feel,—that your heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

You

You must, in some degree, feel this, before you will experimentally know the worth of Jesus Christ.

They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Till we feel the plague of our hearts, we shall not set a proper value on Him, who was manifested in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil. I have not opportunity at present to add more, than that,

I am, your affectionate Father.

## LETTER VIII.

My dear Lad,

I Have just now read your very affectionate letter. You say the place is now empty to you:—" *Now you have no cousin, no father, no brother.*" You have, my love, a Father who is ever present with you;—who can fill that emptiness of mind which you feel. Go, my beloved boy, when your soul feels a want of earthly friends, go in secret walks of meditation and prayer, and tell your heavenly Father the desires you feel; ask him to give you that peace which passeth understanding, to fill you with the spirit of prayer; then you will know what it is to have support, tho' deprived of the presence of your father, brother, and every kind friend.

Your letter affected me in this view. I thought,—my dear boy is now feeling what his father long felt, viz. that we need a rest of mind, when we are stripped of all earthly comfort. This rest is the peace of God in the heart. There is a sweetness to be found in prayer, which more than compensates for the absence of our kindest friends. May you soon know it by experience!



Do be cautious how you form acquaintances. Remember, the Bible, and not the foolish customs of the world, is to be your guide.

I am, your affectionate Father.

## LETTER IX.

My very dear Boy,

THE pleasure I feel in conversing with my children, makes me hope, that the longer we live together, the more I shall see of their affection and duty. Hitherto I have been much satisfied with the attention you have shewn to every thing I have said to you. I believe you would, (if you knew how,) prevent my requests. Your attention is, as the scripture says, "Not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but of a ready mind." You remember Dr. Watt's fine hymn,

" 'Tis love that makes our willing feet,  
" In swift obedience move."

This "love is of God." He gives your father his affection for you,—and fixes love to me, in your breast. It is my daily prayer, that it may "abound more and more." I write thus, that when you feel a pleasure in obeying your father, you may secretly and earnestly plead with your heavenly Father, that he would shed abroad *his love* in your heart. You know what it is to love an earthly parent, and can you not, from hence, easily conceive, what it will be to feel your soul moved with a consideration of God's love to you? I think, on examination, you will find there are two principal causes, why you love your father, 1st. Because you conceive of something wise and good in him. 2d. Because of the love he manifests towards you. This observation



usefulness, while, at the same time, they teach them to sit in the lowest place. Sentiments of this kind led me to enquire,—What sort of Instruction it was in my power to communicate, that would give my children the greatest opportunities of being useful in life? I thought, they are preparing for a dangerous voyage ;—the rudiments of education, are the stores which they will need on their passage :—It is impossible to determine what they will meet with ;—but it is my duty to provide them with necessaries for every possible hazard.

I had little doubt of their attaining what is taught in common schools ; but it was an enquiry of some moment,—How a foundation might be laid for more general KNOWLEDGE, of those subjects which concern us as members of civil society, distinguished from the particular branches of instruction, which merely affect our peculiar profession or occupation in life. It is one thing to have a well-informed mind ; another, to be proficient in our particular calling. We may be the latter, and yet remain comparatively barbarians. Nevertheless, if there be a sound judgment, there will be a readiness to cultivate that which is most important to ourselves. Trace this sentiment to its largest extent, and it discovers the pre-eminence of the enlightened statesman, over the dark and rude savage : The latter can form his canoe, or hurl his dart, with much greater dexterity than the former ; but his superior information enables him to grasp the designs, and affect the interests of millions. Hence, to cultivate a knowledge of human nature, must be considered as an important design of education ; because, he that knows little of the heart, must be proportionably unfit for the influencing of others ; whilst he, who is best acquainted with the springs of human action, and at the same time knows how to direct these to their best end, will be most calculated to succeed in his attempts to do good.

The



The question that arose from these reflections, was,—How shall I begin, in early life, to fix those principles which will produce such effects? What sort of information will most effectually direct the judgment, and at the same time, stimulate to a proper imitation of the wise and good? How shall industry and benevolence be excited, by all that my children may be taught? How shall they acquire a thorough knowledge of mankind, without suffering from the contagion of evil example? How shall they be made solicitous to use all their powers for great and good purposes? How shall I convince them, that no situation in life is too insignificant, for us to attempt being universal blessings, to all we are connected with? How may they rise above all the discouragements of their situation, so as to use all their talents to the best of purposes? Nothing appeared so likely to call forth every generous sentiment, and raise them above all the discouragements, which depress the minds of millions, as the fixing deeply on their minds what had been done by others. Did I wish them to have a humbling view of the littleness of the most distinguished men? To hide pride from them? Was I solicitous to fill them with ardent desires for the happiness of all around them, and to conceive of the human race, as of one blood with them, however divided by the distinctions of humanity? Did I wish them to see and consider the over-ruling,—the over-guiding Hand, which sustains and directs the whole? Was it the duty of a parent, in the education of his children, to provide for the nurture of the most pious and benevolent dispositions in their minds? What means might be used for this purpose?

These reflections almost anticipate an explanation of the method which appeared calculated to answer my ends. Could I cultivate in my charge, a taste for History and Biography, these subjects in preference to many others, appeared

peared conducive to such purposes. For however abused these sciences have been, yet, if I mistake not, to pious minds, few subjects, except those immediately of a religious nature, have a greater tendency to promote humility, benevolence, and piety. The man whose heart is enlarged with LOVE TO GOD, necessarily feels an interest in the concerns of his fellow-creatures; hence arises a desire to know the events which have taken place among men. The man whose heart glows with LOVE TO MEN, will naturally be stimulated to beneficent actions, by instances placed before him, of distinguished zeal and industry. To provide for an acquaintance with history, and eminent characters, appeared to me of more consequence, than that acquaintance with dead languages, which is usually obtained in schools. Not that I suppose the one to be incompatible with the other; but rather, that boys who have some acquaintance with general history, will pursue the languages with greater avidity than others, because their minds will be so much the more capable of understanding the subjects treated of by authors in the learned languages.

The particular method which was pursued to promote their acquaintance with history, I forbear mentioning at present, as it will connect with it several observations on some other subjects, which I hope to give you in the ensuing Letters.

## LETTER XI.

Dear Sir,

MY last closed with an intimation that I hoped to give you some remarks on those subjects which were connected with history, as an important branch of education. The principal

principal of these subjects were Geography and Chronology. If children, almost in a state of infancy, are capable of acquiring the rudiments of the learned languages, there cannot be a doubt, but they are equally capable, at the same period, of attaining the rudiments of these sciences. Hence, almost, at their first acquaintance with the use of words, my children were taught the general terms used in Geography, with the names of the principal cities in the world; and some steps were taken to give them an acquaintance with the outlines of chronological events. I have particularly noticed these subjects, because they do not in general appear to be considered as of that importance which they really are in education: At the same time the usual parts of instruction were not omitted. As my intention in communicating these lines to you, was not to lay down rules for the instruction of those who have the advantages of a liberal education; but only to hint at what might be of service to those whose situation deprives them of such helps; I have therefore little more than noticed, what was really done, and which, were it more generally practised, would probably have a considerable influence on the happiness of a very numerous class of men. Persons of fortune who can send their sons to the best schools; and those young men, who have opportunities of attending well-conducted academies, certainly have advantages very superiour to others. But there are many who have not these privileges, and whose parents are discouraged from attempting that improvement of their offspring, which is really practicable by them. Their discouragement arises principally from two causes; the one is, an apprehension that it would require a degree of time and application which they cannot command; the other is, that *no method* can be used which is preferable to the ordinary one of suffering children to get what they can at common schools, till they are old enough to go to business. Perhaps few persons have tried how soon the human

man



man mind is capable of culture, and provided it be prudently watched over, how capacious it is of a great variety of subjects, without being overburdened.

Were conscientious parents to do what in them lies, with regularity, diligence, and perseverance; I do not see, but the children of ordinary tradesmen, might have advantages in education which they are frequently deprived of. If, indeed, it be a fault to cultivate the minds of our offspring, those parents who are most negligent, are most praise-worthy; but nature and religion both revolt at the thought, and plead more for the improvement of the minds of our children, than for the advancement of their fortune.

The attention that is paid to the instruction of boys in ordinary schools, will not be sufficient for such a variety of subjects, if parents do not second it at home: And few persons will do this to any purpose who do not seriously undertake it. Too many imagine, that they discharge their duty, merely by attempting to accumulate property for their families; and persuade themselves, that they have neither capacity nor opportunity for instructing their offspring; but would they be thought deserving the name of parents, who should neglect all means of providing for their children, and depend solely upon the exertions of others? Are parents the only persons who are to avoid the labour of instructing youth? Did God design that this most important trust, should be delegated to those who are actuated to the performance of it only by mercenary motives? Parents, surely, from numerous considerations, are the best tutors; and tho' they cannot, on many accounts, be the only ones, yet, perhaps, the cases in which they are entirely prevented from superintending their own charge, are very few.

Surely,

Surely, nothing serves more strongly to cherish filial affection, than the discharge of this part of our duty to our children: But by turning them entirely out to strangers from their infancy, the firmest cements of society, and richest sources of domestic comfort, are often destroyed. For such is the human mind, that as we perceive, and are assured of the love of others, we naturally esteem and love them in proportion; and therefore, when the understandings of children ripen, tho' they discern their obligations to industrious and careful teachers;—yet, with how much greater and more lasting warmth of affection, do they contemplate the labours of parental love in their education? Were there no other argument in its favour, surely pious and affectionate parents, need no more to prompt them to devote some part of their time to such purposes; nor would the sacrifice be much, if time were taken from pleasing company, or even from important business, for such an employ. It may indeed be doubted, whether this be not one of the first and most important of occupations; especially, as a very small portion of time is sufficient to superintend a general plan of education, with such helps as are every where to be had. Difficult as this method may appear, I have found, from several years experience, that one hour in the day, has been sufficient for the purpose. But as I have already given you some account of the time employed, in watching over my charge, I shall in my next proceed to give you some remarks under each particular head, on the method used to promote their information in each branch, and as I have already discussed the subject of Religion, I shall proceed to particularize some of the others: Meantime,

I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

## LETTER XII.

Dear Sir,

I Cannot with greater clearness present you with what I wish to do, than in the very manner in which it occurred. When my children were so far advanced in years, as to require a considerable degree of attention, it occurred to me, that they were surely entitled to as much, as any branch of business I was concerned in; and from this obvious consideration, was I led to make the ensuing remark, which as it immediately leads to the whole subject, I will give you just as it stands:

“ It is usual for persons of learning and business, to pre-  
 “ serve *methodical* and *distinct* remarks upon every important  
 “ subject which may be useful to them:—Considering how  
 “ important the charge of education is, I cannot be too  
 “ particular. I therefore purpose to keep distinct memo-  
 “ randums upon the different branches of it, that I may  
 “ the more easily advert to them when necessary. I  
 “ have this morning opened a blank book, and at proper  
 “ distances given titles, at the head of the leaves, to the  
 “ various subjects they are learning:—by occasionally mak-  
 “ ing such entries under each separate article, I shall easily  
 “ see the progress they make, and the most likely means  
 “ to assist them; at the same time it will considerably re-  
 “ lieve my own mind, when I have to converse with them,  
 “ and preserve some method in the part I have to take in  
 “ their instruction.”

By this artless expedient, I found a plan laid down to which I could continually advert; and which materially assisted my labours. The subjects which my little system embraced, were neither few, nor insignificant; yet they were such as every parent, who has any opportunity, ought to instruct his children in; yea, to use the best means in his power to render that instruction perfect. It will not be necessary to do more at present than give you a list of their names; and illustrate, in a few instances, the particulars under



Under each general head, which will naturally lead to a close of the subject. The contents of my little account were as follows.—

1. Remarks on Religious Instruction.    2. Grammar.
3. Geography.    4. Chronology.    5. History.    6. Biography.
7. Arithmetic.    8. Extracts of Poetry.
9. Miscellaneous Reading.    10. Latin.    11. French.
12. Behaviour.    13. Amusements.

It is scarcely necessary to notice several subjects, as they cannot easily differ from the usual method of teaching. I will not therefore say any more on Grammar, Arithmetic, the Languages, and several others, than that the best books that I could procure were obtained,—the closest application at the time of teaching was enforced, and great pains were taken to explain the principles of whatever subject they were taught. I had some reason to suppose, that their acquaintance with grammar, especially, was superior to most of their years, and that the method used to teach this was successful,—which was, not only to require them to commit the Rules to memory,—but they were so repeatedly examined, respecting the reason and design of these rules, that in many instances, where they could not repeat the words of the rule, they evidenced their understanding it by a rational explanation of its principle. A part of their time was regularly employed at home in reviewing what they had learned at school, and some pains were taken to promote their acquaintance with the other subjects before mentioned.

The following is a transcript of the Memorandums made on the improvement in each branch:—HISTORY. Having prepared my eldest son for reading history by an acquaintance with the outlines of geography and chronology, the first attempt was to make him acquainted with a short, but comprehensive abstract of Universal History. This he has so much knowledge of, that he can, with some propriety answer, the following questions:

1. What was the first kingdom we have an authentic account of?
2. What others rose in succession?
3. What were the important events concerning each?
4. What connection had they with each other?

He having thus a tolerable view of the outlines of Universal History, I intend that he shall cultivate an acquaintance with the following ones in order:—1. The History of the Jews. 2. Of the Babylonians. 3. The Persians. 4. The Grecians. 5. The Romans. 6. The decline of the Roman Empire. 7. The rise and History of Modern Europe. 8. The Mahometan, Persian, Chinese, and Mogul Empires. 9. America. 10. East Indies. 11. South-Sea Islands. At first, I purpose very short abstracts of each to be made. 2. That he shall carefully go twice or thrice through a Geographical Grammar. 3. Afterwards peruse larger Works. 4. Intermix his reading with Voyages and Travels.

I can with pleasure say, that this plan gradually improved his mind, so that at the age of thirteen, he had not only a good foundation laid for reading, but some tolerable acquaintance with the most important events which had taken place in the history of mankind, in the various ages of the world, and some knowledge of the most distinguished characters.

BIOGRAPHY, was a natural consequence of reading history. To encourage him in this, he was furnished with the most useful lives I could meet with, both of religious characters and others,—such as the lives of Warriors and Adventurers; of Statesmen, as well as of Missionaries and Philanthropists. Hence a Biographical Dictionary formed a part of his little library. At the same time he was encouraged to read the account of almost every public person he met with in books.

On the subjects of Geography and Chronology, I have little to observe more, than the method used for his instruction in them, which was, in GEOGRAPHY, 1. To commit to memory the terms used, with their explanation. 2. The names of the principal cities in the known world, with their number of inhabitants, and profession of religion. 3. To shew him on a terrestrial globe, the latitudes, longitudes, climates, &c. 4. To colour the maps in his geographical Grammar. 5. Frequently to trace the boundaries of each country on the globe. 6. Occasionally to give a cursory review of the whole globe, beginning at some part West, and keeping as near as possible a straight course Eastward; and to name the chief cities round the whole globe: Also, beginning at the North Pole. to proceed in the same manner Southward, till he returned to the North Pole. By various exercises of this sort, most of the face of the globe became familiar to him.

The method taken to instruct him in CHRONOLOGY, was very short, viz, 1. To draw a list of the events in each century, from his sketch of universal history. 2. To draw a similar one of the persons best known in each. 3. To furnish him with a good Chronological Table of events for his own library.

It may now be proper to annex a plan of the time spent for these purposes, which was continued nearly the same, whether they attended school or not. 1. The forenoon, was divided between Latin and History. The afternoon was spent in History and English Grammar. The evening, in Arithmetic. 2. The forenoon, in Latin and Geography. The afternoon, in Biography, Chronology, and Miscellanies. The evening, in Writing.

You will recollect, that the opportunity for reviewing the progress my sons made was before breakfast: By taking the subjects alternately, and referring to written remarks, a strict attention was paid to every part. It may be supposed, that  
too



too much application was required from the children; but it is to be observed, that care to use their time properly, was very early inculcated; and that, by a variation of employ, they were seldom fatigued: At the same time, great care was taken not to confine them too long at one time, but to allow them sufficient intervals of relaxation. By reserving one day in the week for general repetition and examination, instead of their being employed in getting additional lessons, —they understood and retained much of what they learned,

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

### LETTER XIII.

Dear Sir,

HAVING in the preceding Letters, collected most of the remarks I had preserved on the subject of Education; I shall only trouble you with the Copy of a Letter written to my Son, when he was removed from me to a public school, at the age of eleven years.

“ My dear Boy, your happiness is of so much moment to me, that besides my fervent prayers for you, and the instructions I have often repeated, I now sit down to give you in writing some directions, which I hope you will preserve, and frequently peruse. They relate to your Learning at School;—the Application of your leisure time;—matters of a religious Nature;—your Conduct towards all you are now connected with;—and lastly, Remarks on any subject that occurs. I shall be thus particular, because I expect you will frequently have recourse to this letter; and if I have not included every thing necessary, you will write to me, and ask any questions you wish to have answered.

To begin with your Learning at School. I expect I have not occasion to say much on this head, as you will naturally rise in the school, in proportion to your improvement. Mr. T \*\*\*\* asked me yesterday, if I wished you to learn the

the Latin? My reply was, that I wished him to try what you were capable of, and then give me his opinion. Now if you prefer sloth and ignorance, to industry and knowledge, he will naturally recommend to me, not to be at the expence of a classical education for you; and a few months negligence *now*, may deprive you, for life, of that advantage. I am no more a friend to unnecessary learning, than to unnecessary clothing or furniture; but you may recollect, that when Capt. Cook sailed for his voyage round the world, he took in an immense quantity of stores, besides what were really necessary for victualling his ship; one reason for which was, that he wished to be useful to the countries he might visit, and scarcely knew what would do most good. You are just preparing for a dangerous voyage;—you are now entering into a state, in which, (thro' the divine blessing) you may not only get stores to serve your own passage, but which may fit you for general usefulness. To stimulate you to this, I wish you to read the lives of Lord Kaims, and the Duke of Sully, and notice the manner in which they spent their time, as it was owing, in a considerable degree, to their application, that they became so useful to their fellow-creatures. Never forget, that industry, humility, and prayer, render us, in general, fit instruments for the Lord's use, either in the affairs of this, or a better world.

It is impossible to determine what may be your future situation; but that merciful Hand, which hath hitherto been over you, will, I trust, direct and preserve you thro' life. I covet nothing great for you: My highest wish and prayer is, that you may be *holy, happy, and useful*; and that if your father should not be able to leave you a shilling, you may be fitted to adorn the lowest situation in life; remembering, you bear the Name of him, who “had not where to lay his head.” I write thus, because, I never would have my children to value themselves as descending  
from

from a person of fortune, or expect to go thro' life, like those who are called "the sons of gentlemen." Be outdone by none, in acts of compassion to the poor, in courteous, polite, and manly behaviour towards all. But all the assuming and extravagant conduct of "the followers of Lord Bottom," I expect you will pity and avoid, as discovering a want, both of understanding and piety. I have been insensibly led to these reflections while treating of your learning. Yet it would be a matter of solid joy to me, to learn from Mr. T\*\*\*\*, that such is your intense desire of improvement; your close application;—the correctness with which you commit every thing necessary to memory;—the pains you take to understand your instructions; the true judgment you form of what you learn; and the manly, yet modest manner in which you express yourself, when asked a question, that he is thereby induced strongly to recommend me to give you the best education in my power.

You will observe, I wish you to proceed as diligently as possible, in Latin, French, Writing, Arithmetic, and Geography. I suppose these will fill up your time from the hour of rising till five each evening. In these I advise you, not merely to get your exercises by heart, but as you go along, ask yourself, "Do I understand this?" If not, reflect upon it till you do; or, if you cannot, make an entry in a book for the purpose, suppose it to be in your Latin, remark as follows, "Feb. 8th. this day the following "passage was in my exercise, (here write the passage,) which I do not properly understand." When you have made this remark, leave so much blank-paper as will enable you to write the explanation underneath it. Do the same in every important difficulty that occurs to you in whatever you are learning; bestow your leisure time in searching out the solution of these difficulties, and your master will soon see your improvement. Speak French with



with your companions as frequently as you can. Be correct in your writing and arithmetic. I have now mentioned what occurred to me on your learning at school; but I wish to be more particular with respect to the improvement of your leisure time; as that will greatly depend upon your own industry. I take it for granted that you have nearly as follows: Each day from twelve till two, and from five till eight: That is, five hours each day for four days, is twenty hours: To which you may add Thursday afternoon five more, and Saturday eight hours; which added together, will be thirty-three hours each week. Now I deduct two hours each day for victuals and exercise, or twelve in a week, there will then remain about twenty-one hours in a week, besides leisure for exercise, which should do wonders. But admitting this is over-rated, and that you have only two hours per diem, or twelve hours in a week, entirely at command, of what use may not these be? I do seriously say, you ought to employ twelve hours in a week in other labours, besides those of your school, and yet you will have abundance of time for proper exercise: But I shall be able to judge whether improvement, or play, has most influence.

That you may improve by what you read, I would have such list. Preserve what you have already learned. 2. Read books as are most likely to be useful.

In order to assist you in preserving what you have learned, I will send you blank books for the following purposes:

No. I. For difficulties you meet with in your learning, agreeable to the preceding observations.

No. II. To preserve Remarks on any subject not of a religious nature, such as Anecdotes, History, Biography, or Poetry.

No. III. To preserve Remarks on religious subjects, such as sermons you may hear, books you read, difficult passages of scripture, or any thing which relates to religious instruction.

No. IV. I would have you use as a kind of Diary or Journal, to which no one may have access but yourself: If you only write in this once a week, it will be useful to preserve every thing which particularly affects your mind, especially of a religious nature.

No. V. You may use for the preserving copies of any Letters you receive, that you think valuable.

I would not have you fill these blank books too soon. The method I advise is this: Suppose you should employ one hour each evening in reading, and to begin, for instance, with the History of America; while you are reading, you observe some passage which you think deserves notice, but you have not leisure at that time to do more than make a memorandum in your pocket book of the page: But another evening, you may be more disposed to write than read;—you review your memorandums, and perhaps, out of ten places you have marked, on a review, you find some too long, some not important, some too difficult, and out of ten, you only copy one or two: By this mean, the work of extracting will be a pleasure. But if you attempt to write at the time you read, you will find it impracticable. Do not be discouraged at finding difficulties in making extracts. Sometimes the contents of a book, or the title, or the remarks on the margin, will be all you can do. But at any rate, let no week pass without adding something to your remarks, if it be only *six* lines; tho' I certainly wish you not to oppress yourself.

Whatever book you read, consider its general design, and insert it in your manuscripts. Go thro' it, if you can; and if you make no extracts, yet remark that you have read it, and if you can, insert what you think of it.

I come now to things of a religious nature, which I shall consider under two general heads: 1st. The manner of spending the sabbath. 2d. The gaining of a religious temper. I have now, my dear boy, with greater solemnity than ever, to charge you to keep holy the Sabbath-Day.

Hence

Hence, you must avoid even those words which are lawful on another day. When, therefore, you find your companions entering into conversation about temporal affairs on the Lord's-day, 1st. Lift up your heart in prayer to God, to preserve you. 2d. Withdraw as soon as possible. If ever you should have a pleasure in foolish conversation on that day, it will destroy all your serious impressions. I would recommend you to employ your Sabbath evenings alone, in your own room; where, besides the perusal of the Scriptures, and the religious writings you have with you, it will be very proper to write in your diary, especially those subjects which impress your mind; as it will help to preserve religious impressions, and enable you to express yourself with ease upon them.

But you never will continue to spend your time thus, if you are an entire stranger to a *religious Temper*. This God alone can give you, and he certainly will, if you ask it, because he hath promised it.

By a religious temper, I mean, such a sense of *invisible and eternal things*, as will influence and govern your desires, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows. This will give you pleasure in religious employments. Thro' the preventing grace of God, I trust you already know these things, in some little measure; especially when hearing affecting sermons, or reading pious books; and this makes me lay so much stress on the due employment of the Sabbath, because I am very apprehensive that having so few helps, and so many hindrances, if you do not carefully improve these sacred hours, your good desires will vanish away.

I have great hopes, that if you give yourself to prayer, reading and meditation, on that day, God, of his great mercy, will himself be your teacher and preserver.

My dear boy, it is on your soul's account that I so earnestly intreat you to flee to your closet, to speak to God as your Father;—search his word, and he will not “break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.”

With



With respect to your conduct to all around you. Do not forget, "You are to follow no man, farther than he follows Christ." 2nd. Remember who has said,—“Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Therefore, we may not follow the multitude to do evil.

2. *Be the Friend of All.* More especially, be all attention and respect to your Masters. To the Poor, particularly the aged Poor, shew the utmost tenderness. Before your superiors, discover at once modesty and firmness. Avoid disputes and quarrels with your school-fellows, and conciliate their affections, when you can do it with a good conscience.

I have now, my dear boy, written you a very long letter, and it is probable that you may suppose I have set you a great deal of work: But the whole may be reduced to two or three points, viz. 1st. *Be diligent.* 2nd. Always have some certain work at hand. 3d. Pursue that work in *proper ORDER.* That God may abundantly bless the instructions you receive, is the constant prayer of your affectionate FATHER.

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FINIS.

